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ID:3M 220-11-01

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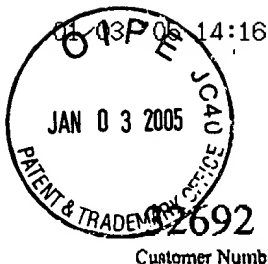
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FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL FORM	Application Number	09/677805
	Filing Date	October 2, 2000
	First Named Inventor	Bedingham, William
	Art Unit	1743
	Examiner Name	Brian R. Gordon
Fax: 703-746-4000	Attorney Docket Number	55943US003
Total Number of Pages in This Submission: 6 including fax cover sheet		
Date: January 3, 2005		Attorney for Applicant: Christopher D. Gram

ENCLOSURES (check all that apply)		
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Patent
Case No.: 55943US003

Customer Number

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

First Named Inventor: BEDINGHAM, WILLIAM
Application No.: 09/677805 Group Art Unit: 1743
Filed: October 2, 2000 Examiner: Brian R. Gordon
Title: SAMPLE PROCESSING APPARATUS, METHODS AND
SYSTEMS

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
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<u>3 Jan. 2005</u> Date	<u>Laci Burhop</u> Signed by: Laci Burhop

Dear Sir:

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 6-8, 13, and 16-49 are allowable and have noted the Examiner's reasons for finding the claims allowable. Applicants, however, respectfully make the following comments with respect to the Examiner's statements regarding allowability of the claims. Applicants' comments do not affect allowability of claims 6-8, 13, and 16-49 and are presented to indicate that the Examiner's stated reasons for allowance should not be construed as limiting all of the allowed claims.

Applicants agree with the Examiner that the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest an apparatus for processing sample materials, the apparatus comprising: a platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface; a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform; retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform, wherein the retention structure is capable of retaining a rotating multi-chambered processing device proximate the upper surface of the platform and wherein at least some of the plurality of stationary fluid chambers further comprise filter material, as recited in claim 6. Applicants respectfully point out, however, that neither claim 6 nor any other independent claim

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recited herein, recites that the filter material is for filtering the sample material prior to the sample being placed in the multi-chambered processing device.

Additionally, Applicants point out that the present invention includes alternative embodiments of an apparatus for processing sample materials. In particular, the present invention also includes an apparatus for processing sample materials, the apparatus comprising: a platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface; a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform, wherein the plurality of stationary fluid chambers are arranged in a rectilinear array on the upper surface of the platform; retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform; and a processing device located within the retention structure proximate the upper surface of the platform, the processing device comprising a plurality of process chambers, wherein the processing device is capable of being rotated within the retention structure to move the plurality process chambers, and wherein at least one of the process chambers on the processing device is positioned at a transfer site proximate the upper surface of the platform, wherein the location of the transfer site is fixed relative to the stationary fluid chambers and further comprising complementary registration structure on the platform and the processing device, the complementary registration structure aligning the at least one process chamber at the location defined by the rectilinear array of the stationary fluid chambers when the processing device is stationary, as recited in claim 13.

Applicants further point out that the present invention also includes the following embodiments, as recited in claim 16 and claim 20: an apparatus for processing sample materials, the apparatus comprising: a platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface; a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform wherein at least some of the plurality of stationary fluid chambers further comprise filter material; retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform; and a processing device located within the retention structure proximate the upper surface of the platform, the processing device comprising a plurality of process chambers, wherein the processing device is capable of being rotated within the retention structure to move the plurality process chambers (claim 16), and an apparatus for processing sample materials, the apparatus comprising: a platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface; a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform; retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform; and a processing device located within the retention structure proximate the upper

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surface of the platform, the processing device comprising a plurality of process chambers, wherein the processing device is capable of being rotated within the retention structure to move the plurality process chambers and wherein the processing device is captive within the retention structure on the platform (claim 20).

The present invention additionally includes methods and systems for processing sample materials. Specifically, the present invention includes a method of processing sample material, the method comprising: providing a platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface, a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform, and retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform; providing a processing device in the retention structure proximate the upper surface of the platform, the processing device comprising a plurality of process chambers; providing sample material in a plurality of the plurality of process chambers on the processing device; delivering energy to the process chambers containing sample material to raise the temperature of the sample materials in the process chambers; and rotating the processing device about an axis of rotation within the retention structure while delivering the energy, wherein the temperature of the sample materials in the process chambers is controlled as the processing device rotates to process the sample materials, as recited in claim 21.

The present invention further includes a method of processing sample material, the method comprising: providing a platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface, a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform, and retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform, wherein the plurality of stationary fluid chambers are arranged in a rectilinear array on the upper surface of the platform; placing a processing device in the retention structure proximate the upper surface of the platform, the processing device comprising a plurality of process chambers; positioning at least one of the process chambers on the processing device at a transfer site proximate the upper surface of the platform, wherein the location of the transfer site is fixed relative to the stationary fluid chambers; loading sample material in a plurality of the plurality of process chambers on the processing device, wherein the process chambers are loaded while positioned at the transfer site; rotating the processing device about an axis of rotation within the retention structure on a spindle extending through a spindle opening formed through the upper and lower surfaces of the platform; delivering energy to at least some of the plurality of process chambers containing

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sample material while rotating the processing device to control the temperature of the sample materials in the process chambers, whereby the sample materials are processed; and transferring the sample materials from the process chambers on the processing device to the plurality of stationary fluid chambers on the platform after processing the sample materials; where the sample materials in the process chambers are transferred while the process chambers are located at the transfer site, as recited in claim 35.

The present invention also includes a system for processing sample material, the system comprising: a workspace comprising a processing station; at least one platform located within the workspace, each platform comprising an upper surface and a lower surface, a plurality of stationary fluid chambers opening at the upper surface of the platform, and retention structure occupying a portion of the upper surface of the platform; at least one processing device located within the workspace, each processing device comprising a plurality of process chambers, wherein rotation of the processing device within the retention structure on the platform moves the plurality process chambers in a circular pattern; a spindle located at the processing station; and a transfer device operative within the workspace, the transfer device capable of transferring sample material from the processing station to another location within the workspace, as recited in claim 44.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding these comments.

It is believed that no fee is due; however, in the event a fee is required, please charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 13-3723.

Respectfully submitted,

1/8/2005
Date

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